



King County  
**Public Rules and Regulations**

Public Rules

Title Rural Stewardship Plans	Document Code No.
Department of Natural Resources and Parks Department/Issuing Agency	Effective Date.
Approved	

**1.0 SUBJECT TITLE:** Rural Stewardship Plans

1.1 EFFECTIVE DATE: February 2005 (tentative)

1.2 TYPE OF ACTION: New

1.3 KEY WORDS: Best Management Practice, Buffer, Clearing, Critical areas,  
Rural, Stewardship

**2.0 PURPOSE:** To establish and explain the process for developing a Rural Stewardship Plan.

**3.0 ORGANIZATIONS AFFECTED:**

3.1 Rural residential landowners or citizens able to make long term stewardship commitments on behalf of these landowners, including maintenance and monitoring, on a particular property.

3.2 Department of Development and Environmental Services, or their successors.  
900 Oakesdale Avenue SW  
Renton, WA 98055-1219  
206-296-6600

3.3 Water and Land Resources Division, or their successors.  
201 South Jackson St, Suite 600  
Seattle, WA 98104  
206-296-6519

**4.0 REFERENCES:**

R.C.W. 36.70A – Growth Management  
W.A.C. 365.190 – Growth Management

W.A.C. 365.195 – Growth Management

K.C.C. 21A.24 – Critical Areas

Sections 132 (allowed alterations), 134 and 135 (rural stewardship planning), 142 (reporting), 179 (wetlands), 186 (aquatic areas)

K.C.C. 16.82 – Clearing and Grading

K.C.C. 2.98 - Rules of County Agencies

K.C.C. 9 – Surface Water Management

K.C.C 20.36 - Public Benefit Rating System

King County Comprehensive Plan

Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook

## 5.0 DEFINITIONS:

5.1 Applicant: A rural residential landowner, or a citizen entrusted by a rural residential landowner, who is able to make long-term stewardship commitments on a particular rural residential property, who prepares, submits or amends a Rural Stewardship Plan under KCC.21A.24.134 and this Public Rule.

5.2 Critical Areas Designation: An identification of the presence, type, and location of critical areas on a particular property including aquatic areas, wetlands, wildlife habitat conservation areas, wildlife habitat network, severe channel migration hazard areas, coal mine hazard areas, landslide areas and steep slopes that may be required in a Rural Stewardship Plan. The need for a critical areas designation is determined by DDES. The designation may be completed by DDES or a private consultant. Once completed, the designation is valid for two years.

5.3 Critical Areas Management Component: A part of a rural stewardship plan that describes the conditions and standards by which critical areas and their buffers will be restored, enhanced or maintained.

5.4 DDES: Department of Development and Environmental Services of King County or its successor agency.

5.5 Farm Management Component: A part of a rural stewardship plan that meets the requirements of King County Farm Management Plans Public Rule (PUT 8-21).

5.6 Forest Stewardship Component: A part of the rural stewardship plan that meets the requirements of [King County Forest Stewardship Plans Public Rule \(PUT 8-19\) or its successor](#).

5.7 PBRS: Public Benefit Rating System, a King County incentive program to reduce property taxes in exchange for voluntarily conserving or protecting land resources, open space, and timber. PBRS is further discussed in the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook and K.C.C 20.36.

5.8 Rural Stewardship Plan Handbook: A guidance document for determining the appropriate siting of structures and best management practices related to a rural residential development proposal for land use action so that the proposal is tailored to suit the specific conditions of the site. The Rural Stewardship Plan Handbook is available from WLRD or DDES.

5.9 Rural Stewardship Plan: A long-term plan developed by an Applicant and approved by King County. The Plan must be consistent with the goals and standards of this public rule. The plan may include one or more of the following components: critical area management component, farm management component, forest stewardship component, and site development component. Approved Rural Stewardship Plans will be recorded on title and kept on file at WLRD and/or DDES.

5.10 Site Development Component: A part of a Rural Stewardship Plan that describes the conditions and standards by which clearing and grading may occur and describes standards for siting buildings or other constructed features.

5.11 WLRD: Water and Land Resources Division of the King County Department of Natural Resources and Parks or its successor agency.

## 6.0 POLICIES:

6.1 DDES and WLRD shall provide flexibility to critical area protection requirements in the Critical Areas Ordinance (KCC 21A.24) and site development restrictions in the Clearing and Grading Ordinance (KCC 16.82) for eligible rural residential landowners with an approved Rural Stewardship Plan.

6.2 DDES and WLRD shall assist applicants in maintaining, enhancing, or restoring their critical areas and buffers through the development of Rural Stewardship Plans specific to their site, conditions, and critical areas.

6.3 DDES and WLRD shall encourage applicants to be better stewards of their critical areas.

6.4 DDES and WLRD shall provide technical assistance to help applicants meet the goals of the Critical Areas Ordinance (KCC 21A.24.134).

6.5 An Applicant who does not carry out the conditions of the Rural Stewardship Plan, as determined by DDES, shall provide required mitigation and associated costs under KCC 21A.24 and 16.82.

6.6 If any portion of this Public Rule or its application to any person or property is held invalid, the remainder of this Public Rule or the application of the provision to other persons or property shall not be affected.

6.7 This Public Rule is exempt from the rule of strict construction and shall be liberally construed to give full effect to the objectives and purposes for which it was adopted.

## 7.0 PROCEDURES:

### Action By: Applicant

#### Action:

7.1 Investigate and determine whether to pursue the Rural Stewardship Plan process by:

- a. Attending an optional workshop
- b. Discussing Rural Stewardship Planning with DDES or WLRD staff
- c. Reading the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook.

7.2 Determine if the Applicant's Rural Stewardship Plan will include a site development component as defined in this rule. If a site development component will be included, then follow Procedure 7.4. If there will be no site development component, then follow Procedure 7.3.

### 7.3 Rural Stewardship Plan without a Site Development Component

#### Action by: Applicant

#### Action:

7.3.1 Complete and submit the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook Site Checklist to WLRD.

#### Action By: WLRD

#### Action:

7.3.2 Review the Site Checklist submitted by the Applicant. Discuss plan goals and objectives with the Applicant. Determine whether additional supporting studies, including a critical areas designation, will be required elements of the Applicant's Rural Stewardship Plan.

7.3.3 Provide appropriate technical assistance at no cost to the Applicant during the Applicant's Site Checklist and Plan development. (Fee based technical assistance is available from DDES to help applicants meet Code requirements.)

Action By: Applicant

Action:

7.3.4 Provide WLRD and/or DDES access to the site for site visits and to assist with Plan development.

7.3.5 Complete additional supporting studies identified in Procedure 7.3.2, and submit them to WLRD (a consultant or DDES, at an hourly fee, may be hired to complete any supporting studies).

7.3.6 Submit a Rural Stewardship Plan to WLRD for review according to the requirements in KCC.21A.24.134 and this Public Rule. This Plan must include at a minimum:

- a. Identification with text and map of existing critical areas, structures, cleared and forested areas and other significant features, both natural and developed, on the site.
- b. Tax parcel number
- c. Site checklist worksheet provided by the County
- d. Site design map, according to guidance in the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook, showing planned changes to existing structures that affect the site or for any changes to the site that involve clearing or grading.
- e. A schedule for implementation of the elements of the Rural Stewardship Plan, including a schedule for realizing performance measures.
- f. A plan for monitoring the effectiveness of measures taken to protect, restore, or enhance critical areas and their buffers and to modify the rural stewardship plan if such measures are found to be ineffective.

7.3.7 Include the following Plan elements as appropriate:

- a. A Critical Area Management component for properties that include critical areas or critical area buffers. This plan component must include site-specific protection standards and best management practices approved by WLRD to maintain, restore or enhance critical areas and their buffers and maintain, restore or enhance native vegetation on the site according to the guidance in the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook.
- b. A Farm Management component for properties that have or are proposing agricultural activities, including farm-related development. If a farm management

component is applicable, elements of the Farm Management Plan Public Rule (PUT 8-21) must be met, including site-specific protection standards and best management practices, as determined by WLRD, and included in the Rural Stewardship Plan.

c. A Forest Stewardship component for properties that have or are proposing forest practices or forest management. If a forest stewardship component is applicable, elements of the King County Forest Stewardship Plans Public Rule (PUT 8-19) must be met, including site-specific protection standards and best management practices, as determined by WLRD, and included in the Rural Stewardship Plan.

d. A Critical Areas Designation.

Action By: WLRD

Action:

7.3.8 Provide reasonable and appropriate technical assistance at no cost to the Applicant during the Applicant's Plan development. (Fee based technical assistance is available from DDES to help applicants meet Code and permit requirements.)

7.3.9 Review Plan for completeness, compliance with KCC 21A.24.134, this Public Rule (PUT 8-20), the Farm Management Plan Public Rule (PUT 8-21), the Forest Stewardship Plan Public Rule (PUT 8-19), and for the effective use of the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook.

7.3.10 Determine plan approval or disapproval within 30 days of Applicant's submittal. Notify the Applicant that the Plan is:

- a. Approved. Return a copy of the approved Plan to the Applicant.
- b. Not approved. Provide documentation about how the Plan does not meet the requirements and whether actions may be taken or modifications made to achieve compliance.

7.3.11 Approved Rural Stewardship Plan

Action By: Applicant

Action:

7.3.11.1 Apply for PBRs, if desired, following the Plan's approval.

7.3.11.2 Record the Rural Stewardship Plan with the King County Records and Elections Division and provide WLRD with documentation that the Plan has been recorded.

7.3.11.3 Make the property available to WLRD for monitoring and compliance inspections as agreed in the approved Rural Stewardship Plan or otherwise arranged.

7.3.11.4 Propose an amendment to an approved Rural Stewardship Plan at any time after plan approval if the Applicant wishes to make land use changes contrary to plan content or compromising PBRs eligibility. Notify WLRD of the intent to amend and resubmit the plan for approval. Amendments will follow the same review and approval schedule as all Rural Stewardship Plans.

Action By: WLRD

Action:

7.3.11.5 Arrange site visits with the Applicant in advance of any monitoring or compliance inspection.

#### 7.3.12 Disapproved Rural Stewardship Plan

Action By: Applicant

Action:

7.3.12.1 Review the documentation from WLRD explaining why the Plan was not approved and decide to:

- a. Submit a revised Plan that meets the needs identified by WLRD,
- b. Request another permitting process offered under the King County Code, or
- c. Terminate the Plan application.

#### 7.4 Rural Stewardship Plan with a Site Development Component

Action by: Applicant

Action:

7.4.1 Complete and submit the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook Site Checklist to WLRD.

Action By: WLRD

Action:

7.4.2 Review the Site Checklist submitted by the Applicant. Discuss plan goals and objectives with the Applicant. Determine whether additional supporting studies, including a critical areas designation, will be required elements of the Applicant's Rural Stewardship Plan.

7.4.3 Provide appropriate technical assistance at no cost to the Applicant during the Applicant's Site Checklist and Plan development.

7.4.4 Forward the Site Checklist to DDES if WLRD determines that DDES consultation pertaining to permit or code requirements is needed.

Action By: Applicant

Action:

7.4.5 Provide WLRD and DDES access to the site for site visits to assist with Plan development.

7.4.6 Complete additional supporting studies identified in Procedure 7.4.2, and submit them to WLRD (a consultant or DDES, at an hourly fee, may be hired to complete technical aspects of a supporting study).

7.4.7 Submit a Rural Stewardship Plan to WLRD for review and coordination with DDES according to the requirements in KCC.21A.24.134 and this Public Rule. This Plan must include at a minimum:

- a. Identification with text and map of existing critical areas, structures, cleared and forested areas and other significant features, both natural and developed, on the site.
- b. Tax parcel number
- c. Site Checklist worksheet provided by the County
- d. Site design map, according to guidance in the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook, showing planned changes to existing structures that affect the site or for any changes to the site that involve clearing or grading.
- e. A schedule for implementation of the elements of the Rural Stewardship Plan, including a schedule for realizing performance measures.
- f. A plan for monitoring the effectiveness of measures taken to protect, restore, or enhance critical areas and their buffers and to modify the rural stewardship plan if such measures are found to be ineffective.



#### 7.4.8 Include the following Plan elements as appropriate:

- a. A Critical Area Management component for properties that include critical areas or critical area buffers. This plan component must include site-specific protection standards and best management practices, as determined by WLRD, to maintain, restore or enhance critical areas and their buffers and maintain, restore or enhance native vegetation on the site according to the guidance in the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook.
- b. A Farm Management component for properties that have or are proposing agricultural activities, including farm-related development. If a farm management component is applicable, elements of the Farm Management Plan Public Rule (PUT 8-21) must be met, including site-specific protection standards and best management practices, as determined by WLRD, and included in the Rural Stewardship Plan.
- c. A Forest Stewardship component for properties that have or are proposing forest practices or forest management. If a forest stewardship component is applicable, elements of the King County Forest Stewardship Plans Public Rule PUT 8-19 must be met, including site-specific protection standards and best management practices, as determined by WLRD, and included in the Rural Stewardship Plan.
- d. A Site Development component for properties that propose changes to existing structures or propose new structures, new impervious surfaces, new septic systems, new wells, or changes to the site that involve clearing or grading that is not for the purposes of restoration and enhancement or not covered under a critical areas management component as defined in this rule. Farm-related development will be covered under the farm management component as defined in this rule. The following elements are required in this component:
  1. Site map(s) approved by DDES, including planned land uses and site features for the next five to ten years including, as applicable: structures, septic systems, wells, site access, clearing and grading, site drainage, open space areas, and designated critical areas and critical area buffers.
  2. An assessment of the critical areas buffer condition according to guidance in the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook.
  3. Identification of the basin condition based on King County Basin and Shoreline Conditions Map, if applicable.
  4. Identification of the site location based on Upper and Lower Tributary Areas Map (see Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook), if applicable.
  5. A description of probable impacts resulting from planned alterations to assist in identifying site-specific best management practices.
  6. Site-specific best management practices to maintain, restore or enhance critical areas and their buffers and maintain, restore or enhance native vegetation on the site in accordance with best management practices

approved by DDES or WLRD, according to the guidance in the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook.

7. King County Health Department approvals, if applicable.

e. A Critical Areas Designation.

Action By: WLRD

Action:

7.4.9 Provide reasonable and appropriate technical assistance at no cost to the Applicant during the Applicant's Plan development.

7.4.10 Forward all materials relating to site development to DDES.

7.4.11 Review Plan for completeness, compliance with KCC 21A.24.134, this Public Rule (PUT 8-20), the Farm Management Plan Public Rule (PUT 8-21), the Forest Stewardship Plan Public Rule (PUT 8-19), and for the effective use of the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook.

Action By: DDES

Action:

7.4.12 Provide appropriate fee-based technical assistance as available to the Applicant during the Applicant's Plan development.

7.4.13 Review Plan for completeness, compliance with all King County Code, this Public Rule (PUT 8-20), and for the effective use of the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook.

Action By: Applicant

Action:

7.4.14 Develop a bond agreement with DDES unless the best management practices and performance measures identified in the Rural Stewardship Plan are achieved prior to pursuing permits for site development. Determine the bond quantity using a King County bond quantity worksheet.

Action By: DDES

Action:

7.4.15 Determine approval or disapproval within 45 days of Applicant's submittal. Notify the Applicant that the Plan is:

- a. Approved. Return a copy of the approved Plan to the Applicant.
- b. Not approved. Provide documentation about how the Plan does not meet the requirements and whether actions may be taken or modifications made to achieve compliance.

7.4.16 Approved Rural Stewardship Plan

Action By: Applicant

Action:

7.4.16.1 Apply for necessary permits and PBRs, if desired, following the Plan's approval.

7.4.16.2 Post a bond with DDES in accordance with the bond agreement developed in Procedure 7.4.14 prior to permit approval.

7.4.16.3 Record the Rural Stewardship Plan with the King County Records and Elections Division and provide DDES and WLRD with documentation that the Plan has been recorded.

7.4.16.4 Make the property available to WLRD and DDES for monitoring and compliance inspections as agreed in the approved Rural Stewardship Plan or otherwise arranged.

7.4.16.5 Propose an amendment, if necessary, to an approved Rural Stewardship Plan at any time after plan approval if the Applicant wishes to make land use changes that conflict with the commitments made in the Plan. Notify WLRD of the intent to amend and resubmit the plan for approval. Amendments will follow the same review and approval schedule as all Rural Stewardship Plans.

Action By: DDES

Action:

7.4.16.6 Arrange site visits with the Applicant in advance of any monitoring or compliance inspections.

Action By: WLRD

Action:

7.4.16.7 Assist the Applicant in completing PBRs application, when requested, and forward an approved Plan to the PBRs coordinator.

7.4.16.8 Arrange site visits with the Applicant in advance of any monitoring or compliance inspections.

#### 7.4.17 Disapproved Rural Stewardship Plan

Action By: Applicant

Action:

7.4.17.1 Review the documentation from DDES explaining why the Plan was not approved and decide to:

- a. Submit a revised Plan that meets the needs identified by DDES,
- b. Request another permitting process offered under the King County Code,
- c. Appeal a determination to the hearing examiner if the Applicant believes it to be unjustified, using the preapplication appeal process defined in the King County Code (KCC 20.20.030), or
- d. Terminate the Plan application.

## 8.0 RESPONSIBILITIES:

8.1 The Applicant is responsible for:

8.1.1 Developing the Rural Stewardship Plan in accordance with KCC 21A.24.134, this Public Rule (PUT 8-20), the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook, and if appropriate, the Farm Management Plan Public Rule (PUT 8-21) or the Forest Stewardship Plan Public Rule (PUT 8-19).

8.1.2 Working with WLRD and DDES staff to develop their Rural Stewardship Plan.

8.1.3 Submitting the completed Rural Stewardship Plan to WLRD.

8.1.4 Revising the Rural Stewardship Plan if directed to by DDES or WLRD.

8.1.5 Preparing a bond agreement with DDES to be posted during the permitting process. A bond agreement is necessary if the Rural Stewardship Plan contains a site development component and the best management practices and performance measures identified in the Rural Stewardship Plan are not achieved prior to pursuing permits for site development.

8.1.6 Implementing all components of the Plan.

8.1.7 Allowing DDES and WLRD reasonable access to their property as needed for plan development, monitoring, and compliance.

## 8.2 WLRD is responsible for:

8.2.1 Providing optional educational opportunities for landowners pursuing rural stewardship plans.

8.2.2 Providing reasonable technical assistance and guidance at no cost to landowners throughout the planning process.

8.2.3 Reviewing all Rural Stewardship Plans for compliance with the Rural Stewardship Planning Handbook, and if applicable, the Farm Management Plan Public Rule (PUT 8-21) and Forest Stewardship Plan Public Rule (PUT 8-19).

8.2.4 Approving Rural Stewardship Plans that do not have a site development component.

8.2.5 Forwarding all materials relating to site development or needing King County Code interpretation to DDES for support during the review process.

8.2.6 Assisting the Applicant in completing PBRs application, when requested, and forwarding an approved Plan to the PBRs coordinator.

8.2.7 Informing landowners with Rural Stewardship Plans that do not have a site development component if revisions are needed for plan approval.

8.2.8 Monitoring Rural Stewardship Plan elements that are not part of any performance bond requirements under this program.

8.2.9 Monitoring the success of the Rural Stewardship Planning program for the life of the program.

8.2.10 Coordinating with DDES throughout the development of plans with site development components.

### 8.3 DDES is responsible for:

8.3.1 Providing technical assistance and guidance to landowners at an hourly rate throughout the planning process. Technical assistance will focus on helping the applicant comply with King County Code and meet permit requirements.

8.3.2 Reviewing all Rural Stewardship Plans that have a site development component for compliance with all King County Code.

8.3.3 Consulting with WLRD during Plan development and prior to Plan approval to determine whether compliance with the elements identified in 8.2.3 has been met.

8.3.4 Approving Rural Stewardship Plans that have a site development component.

8.3.5 Informing landowners with Rural Stewardship Plans that have a site development component if revisions are needed for plan approval.

8.3.6 Monitoring Rural Stewardship Plan elements that are part of any performance bond requirements under this program.

8.3.7 Releasing bonds at the end of the DDES monitoring period provided the performance measures have been met.